644 "In addition to these dignitaries, the Moro Naba is surrounded with a veritable army of soroné (pages), samandé (bodyguards), ourkima (grooms), and jussaba (eunuchs)."

Some explanations are in order concerning the soroné. They are young boys or adolescents, from seven or eight to fifteen years old, who are to be found not only around the Moro Naba but around all Mossi chiefs, no matter who they may be, ministers, dignitaries, canton chiefs, and even village chiefs. These chiefs obtain them, as we saw earlier, by claiming the first-born son as well as the first-born daughter of all the men to whom they give a wife. The boy is made into a soroné, and the girl used to perpetuate the recruitment of soroné and servitors by giving her in marriage to one of them.

644 The soroné wear their hair like women. Like them, they wear heavy copper bracelets at the wrists and ankles, and if rumor is to 838 be credited, they not only /570/ bear the attributes of women but also substitute for them occasionally. It seems that the Mossi must 834 not have carnal relations with their wives on Friday. This is a religious ordinance meant to ingratiate the divinities, but it overlooked the soroné.... In any case this corruption does not reach the common masses of the Mossi, who do not have the means to employ soroné. Thus it applies only to chiefs.

644 No matter what the case may be, the soroné are usually selected among the most attractive boys, and some of them have great beauty with their woman's hairdo.

Another duty of their position is to remain virgins... as far as women are concerned.

644 "Every year," says Moulins, "the chastity of the Moro Naba's 781 soroné is put to a test. They are requested by the Pouy Naba to cast their 684 reflection into a gourd full of water, and according to the manner in which the reflection is cast, they are proclaimed free from stain or convicted of carnal relations, in which case, prior to our occupation, they were put to death without further delay. This is because the soroné, as confidants of the Naba, are often entrusted with state secrets and could only maintain the discretion required by their position if they were to avoid the entreaties of love.

644 "When the soroné reach manhood, the Naba gives them a wife and sends them away. The first child born of the union between a soroné and the wife given him by the Naba devolves to the latter,

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28

000 19. There is a curious story among the people of Nobere district that Mogho Naba Mottoba (who reigned in the seventeenth century) was not a Mossi but a Fulani who was given the nam after he chanced upon the installation ceremony and assassinated the newly elected man during the night. This story is denied in Ouagadougou; in fact, it contradicts the genealogical records of the ruling dynasty. However, the genealogy does show that Mottoba's father, Mogho Naba Guiliga, had succeeded his brother, and it is possible that there was dynastic rivalry for the nam between Mottoba and the former Mogho Naba's son.

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20. This rite was performed during the installation of the present Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou, although it is hardly recognizable as described in *Newsweek* (December 9, 1957, p. 48): "A man named Moussa Congo assumed the name of Kougri Naba last week and became the 35th Mogho Naba of the Mossi in the capital city of Ouagadougou in the Upper Volta region of French West Africa. Son of Emperor Issoufou Congo, Kougri Naba, as the new Mogho Naba, has one white horse, 200 wives, and 8,000 warriors, who danced around his palace ten times."

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21. This practice has apparently lapsed since Mogho Naba Kougri moved into the modern concrete palace built for his father, Mogho Naba Sagha II.

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22. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Soudan*, pp. 569–70. Tauxier claims the Mogho Nanamse used the pages for homosexual purposes on Fridays in order to circumvent the Moslem prohibition against intercourse with women on this holy day. Homosexuality is rare among the Mossi, as Tauxier himself admits, and most Mossi deny that the Mogho Nanamse ever resorted to it. However, one respondent did state that he had heard about homosexuality among certain past rulers.

23. Crozat, p. 4849.

[648] [762] [797]

24. When Mogho Naba Kom II died under mysterious circumstances in 1942, it was rumored that he had committed suicide rather than reduce the number of his wives as ordered by the administration under the influence of the Catholic missionaries. Kom allegedly held that no one can inherit a sovereign's wife during his lifetime. Therefore, in order to avoid loss of status by seeing his wives go to commoners, he chose death so they would be inherited by nobles.

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25. The statement in *Newsweek* (December 9, 1957, p. 48) that Kougri has two hundred wives is untrue.

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26. Intermarriage between the Mossi and the Fulani has produced a people known as the Simili-Mossi. Nevertheless, the Mossi are strongly prejudiced against the Fulani, especially against the women, stating that the Moaga who has sexual intercourse with a Fulani woman must bathe in nine different rivers before he becomes clean. The basis of this prejudice appears to be that Fulani women are not cultivators and therefore are unacceptable as Mossi wives.

27. Mossi women know a great deal about the history and traditions of their people. But they never indicate that they do except during such rituals, when they are required to play certain roles.

28. Dim Delobson, p. 96.

29. Dim Delobson (p. 101) states that there are "sacred things" in this village, but I have been unable to substantiate his report.

[824]

30. Dim Delobson (p. 104) gives the classic explanation of this nighttime ride. On his ride from Bere to Djiba, the mounted prince must try to touch a certain branch of a certain tree. If he is destined to succeed his father, he will succeed in touching the branch; if he is not, the branch will magically withdraw at his approach.

I visited the area in which this ritual reportedly took place, but the people in the vicinity denied that such a tree existed.

31. *Ibid.*, p. 106.

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32. IFAN (Compte Rendu No. 429). There are many other rumors concerning Kom's death. In a book praising the loyalty of the Africans to the Free French Gov-